

2017 Election: EAC observers arrive

By Nasra Bishumba

A TEAM of 27 observers from the East African Community has arrived in Rwanda on a mission that will see them assess the last few days of the campaigns and the subsequent presidential elections slated for August 4.

The team, headed by former Kenyan Vice President Moody Awori, is composed of 11 members from Tanzania, 11 from Uganda, five from Kenya and two from South Sudan.

At the official launch of the EAC Observer Mission, yesterday, Awori said that elections were a must for any country that believes in economic growth, peace and security.

"No country can attain economic growth, peace and security without the stamp of legitimacy of its government by its citizenry. That's why we appeal for free, fair and transparent elections in all our member states," he said.

Awori pointed out that the observers would be guided by different charters that observe democratic values and principles.

"In its assessment of the elections, the EAC elections observer mission will be guided by the democratic principles and values outlined in the African Charter for democracy, elec-



One of the observers makes an intervention during the official launch of the EAC Observer Mission, yesterday. *Nadege K. Imbabazi.*

tions and governance," he said.

He said that for the two days that he has been in Rwanda, he had enjoyed the peace even with campaigns still ongoing.

"There is a lot that other East Afri-

can countries can learn from Rwanda. There is no need for chaos," he said.

The Director of Information, Education and Communication at the Ministry of Trade Industry and EAC

Affairs, Flavia Salafina told the observers that government attaches value to their work and pledged the country's commitment to the bloc's principles of good governance.

"The participation of this Observer Mission is part of EAC's call to promote democratic governance, to foster total and balanced development if the region in line with the fundamental principles of the region," she said.

The EAC's Deputy Secretary General in Charge of Political Federation; Charles Njoroge, said that with Kenya going to polls on August 8, this is the first time that two member states to the bloc are having presidential elections at around the same time and appealed for objectivity and unbiased reports.

"We intend to deploy the teams on August 1 and the first batch will depart from the country on August 5. On August 6, we will deliver the preliminary report of our findings and, on August 7, the rest of the team will depart," he said.

A total of 10 teams will be deployed in all the country's 30 districts to assess the preparedness and later the polling process.

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